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AUTHOR Edwards, Andrew S.; Morris, John D.
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ABSTRACT

The relationship between dogmatism and the preference for certain teaching styles, both in terms of attitudes and teaching activities seen as gratifying, was examined for a group of ninety-five elementary education students. Separate discriminant analyses were conducted contrasting the more dogmatic students with the less dogmatic in terms of both attitudes and gratification. The more dogmatic students were found to have significantly greater attitudinal preferences for the orderly, dependent, exhibitionistic, and dominant teaching styles. However, no difference was found between the groups in terms of activities seen as gratifying, a possible explanation for which might be that in education courses college teachers may make suggestions about practice which the more dogmatic student may accept from authority, while fundamental attitudes as the trait level remain unaffected. (Author/MJB)

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Dogmatism and Preference for Teaching Sty es

Andrew S. Edwards
Associate Professor of Educational Psychology
Georgia Southern College

John D. Morris
Assistant Professor of Educational Research
Georgia Southern College

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Dogmatism and Preference for Teaching Styles

Teachers exert a great deal of influence on the personality development of their students by serving as adult models and by reinforcing behavior that is congruent with their own personality (Hart, 1967; Mussen et al., 1974).

What must a person learn to function well in our society? Inkeles (1969, p. 615) says, "The critical test of the success of the socialization process lies in the ability of the individual to perform well in the statuses--that is, to play the roles--in which he may later find himself." He further indicates that in the modern world these roles are only vaguely defined and individuals must often be able to improvise as they go along. The question arises as to the kind of teacher characteristics that are necessary to produce the student behaviors that will be able to function effectively in the modern world. Are the teachers presently entering the teaching profession likely to influence their students such that they would be socialized in the manner Inkeles suggests?

The following brief review of the literature will be limited to dogmatism and closely related behaviors.

If low dogmatic teachers are influential in modifying this characteristic in students, then they would be providing them with adaptable skills. For example, Uhes and Shaver (1970) examined the relationship between dogmatism and the ability to perform convergent and divergent operations among high school students. They found that the mean scores on Guilford's scales of flexibility, originality, composite divergent, and composite convergent abilities were higher for low dogmatic subjects in a population homogeneous in terms of general intelligence. High dogmatic subjects performed convergent operations better than they performed divergent operations while low dogmatic subjects performed both operations equally well.

Some characteristics of low dogmatic teachers that are likely to influence developing students in the direction Inkeles suggests are documented below. Non-dogmatic teachers have been found to be more accurate than dogmatic teachers in judging students who had values dissimilar to their own (Hart, 1967). Ziller and Long (1965) found significant and consistently negative relationships between a withholding-opinion index and Rokeach's Dogmatism Scale; concluding that avoidance of the don't-know response under conditions of information inadequacy is an indication of dogmatism. Harvey et al. (1966), Prather (1969) and Tuckman et al. (1971) followed a slightly different approach, in comparing concrete teachers with abstract teachers. They found abstract teachers more resourceful, less dictatorial, and less punitive than concrete teachers. Abstract teachers were also found to be more innovative in open climates than concrete teachers. Their descriptions of abstract and concrete teachers closely paralleled other descriptions of non-dogmatic and dogmatic teachers respectively.

A number of studies have been concerned with the identification of the needs structure of future and in-service teachers (e.g., Cook et al., 1961; Gillis, 1964). Teachers and teacher trainees were found to be more docile and deferent, more willing to conform, and more accepting of highly structured situations as well as having stronger dependency needs than college students in general. In addition, the teacher trainees had less need for humanism, objectivity, and (intellectual) understanding.

It would seem from the foregoing discussion that the characteristic of dogmatism has a significant relationship to the type of behavior a teacher might exhibit. The present study was undertaken to further clarify the relationship between dogmatism and teacher preference for certain teaching styles.

Method

Sample and Procedure. Ninety-five undergraduate elementary education majors enrolled in eight sections of a Human Growth and Development course at Georgia Southern College completed the Teacher Preference Schedule (TPS) (Stern, 1960) and the Dogmatism Scale, Form E (Rokeach, 1960) during the 1975-1976 school year. This course is required in the student's late junior or senior year just prior to a curriculum and methods course and internship. The sample was predominatly female (96%) and white (96%), with a median age of 20.

The Teacher Preference Schedule. The TPS measures perferences for ten teaching styles (Practical, Status-Striving, Nurturant, Nondirective, Critical, Preadult-Fixated, Orderly, Dependent, Exhibitionistic, and Dominant) with six-point Likert-type items in terms of both the subject's general attitudes ("A good teacher likes all his students") and separately in terms of specific teaching activities the subject sees as gratifying ("Playing games with my pupils"). Test-retest reliabilities for the twenty scales, each composed of ten items, range from .65 to .87 with a median of .77 (Stern, 1960).

The Dogmatism Scale. The Dogmatism Scale consists of 40 six-point Likert-type items summed to yield a unidimensional score inversely proportional to the subject's dogmatism. Split-half reliabilities on different samples in academic settings ranged from .68 to .93 with a median of .78 (Rokeach, 1960).

Data Analysis. The sample was split at the median Dogmatism score (145.5) to form a low (above 145.5, N=45) and high (below 145.5, N=50) dogmatism group. Discriminant analyses were used to contrast the two groups in terms of TPS attitudes and gratifications separately.

Result and Conclusion

The multivariate null hypothesis of the equality of the high and low dogmatism groups in terms of TPS attitudes was rejected ($X^2 = 19.96$, DF = 10, $p < .05$), however, the null hypothesis of equivalent teaching activity preferences being seen as necessary to gratify these attitudes between the high and low dogmatism groups could not be rejected ($X^2 = 13.27$, DF = 10, $p > .2$).

Univariate F tests, and an inspection of group means, (Table 1), indicated that, more specifically, the more dogmatic group of future teachers had greater attitudinal preferences for the orderly, dependent, exhibitionistic, and dominant teaching styles.

A possible explanation for the discrepancy between attitudes and gratifications for dogmatic students is that in education courses college teachers may make suggestions about practice that the more dogmatic student may accept from authority, however, fundamental attitudes at the trait level may not be affected. Further study could be undertaken by administering the TPS to these subjects after they have taught for one or two years to see if the more dogmatic students change their responses to the gratification scale in the direction of their present attitudes.

Another possible explanation may be related to the question of social desirability inherent in the TPS (Masling and Stern, 1966). The gratification scale may be more susceptible to socially desirable responses than the attitude scale. Therefore, the attitude scale may be a better measure of the unconscious motives of preservice teachers. The suggestion for further study cited above should shed light on this question.

If further research bears out the greater sensitivity of the TPS Attitude Scale for measuring dogmatic teacher's motives, then it may be considered a useful tool in screening and training future teacher candidates.

Table 1 - TPS Means, Standard Deviations, and Univariate Tests Between High and Low Dogmatism Groups

	Total Sample (N=95)		High Dogmatism (N=50)		Low Dogmatism (N=45)		
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	F(1,93)
Attitudes							
Practical	26.82	5.88	27.92	5.81	25.60	5.78	3.80
Status-striving	38.55	6.42	39.64	5.57	37.33	7.11	3.13
Nurturant	50.12	4.73	49.86	4.86	50.40	4.62	.31
Nondirective	45.64	5.02	45.60	5.13	45.69	4.96	.01
Critical	38.83	5.67	39.42	5.81	38.18	5.50	1.14
Preadult-fixated	42.26	7.39	42.24	7.66	42.29	7.17	.00
Orderly	36.06	7.27	38.42	6.92	33.44	6.80	12.45**
Dependent	37.18	6.38	38.70	6.82	35.51	5.45	6.24*
Exhibitionistic	43.21	6.08	44.54	5.57	41.73	6.35	5.27*
Dominant	31.85	7.10	33.80	7.55	29.69	5.93	8.59**
Gratifications							
Practical	33.33	7.58	34.32	7.24	32.22	7.87	***
Status-striving	47.67	6.35	47.82	6.49	47.51	6.25	
Nurturant	48.93	5.98	48.22	6.52	49.71	5.27	
Nondirective	47.67	5.89	47.10	6.31	48.31	5.39	
Critical	43.04	7.84	42.78	7.54	43.33	8.25	
Preadult-fixated	48.47	6.06	47.76	6.25	49.27	5.80	
Orderly	34.51	7.18	36.46	6.70	32.33	7.16	
Dependent	38.24	6.34	38.76	6.59	37.67	6.07	
Exhibitionistic	49.36	5.60	49.24	5.74	49.49	5.50	
Dominant	31.65	7.45	32.90	7.21	30.27	7.54	

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** Univariate F tests not included since multivariate null not rejected.

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